

Facts:



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Tobacco-Free Schools in Missouri

Missouri's Tobacco Free School Law:

- ❑ No person shall smoke or use tobacco or tobacco products in any indoor area of a public elementary or secondary school building or educational facility, excluding institutions of higher education, or on buses used solely to transport students to or from school or to transport students to or from any place for educational purposes. (RSMo 191.775)
- ❑ Local Boards of Education may adopt policies more stringent than the state law. (RSMo 191.777)

The current status of school policies in Missouri -
Percentage of Missouri secondary schools (grades 6-12) that have policies prohibiting tobacco use by students, faculty/staff and visitors in each of the following locations:

Policy prohibiting use by:	In school buildings	In school buses or other vehicles transporting students	On school grounds	At off-campus, school sponsored events
Students	100%	99%	99%	97%
Faculty/staff	99%	96%	72%	68%
Visitors	98%	94%	59%	41%

Source:
Missouri School Health Education Profile, 2002. Responses from secondary building principals in Missouri.
Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. Jefferson City, Missouri.

Smoking by Missouri students on school property –

- ❑ 9.9% of high school students and 3.3% of middle school students smoked on school property one or more days during the 30 days prior to responding to the Missouri Youth Tobacco Survey.
- ❑ 5.4% of high school students and 2.0% of middle school students used smokeless tobacco on school property one or more days during the 30 days prior to the survey.

Source: Missouri Youth Tobacco Survey. Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Health Promotion. June 2003.

Actions taken by schools with students caught smoking cigarettes on school property:

- ❑ 97% always or almost always refer student to a school administrator
- ❑ 95% always or almost always inform parents or guardians
- ❑ 63% never and 23% rarely require students to participate in an assistance, education, or cessation program
- ❑ 39% always or almost always and 44% sometimes remand students to in-school suspension
- ❑ 26% always or almost always and 45% sometimes suspend students from school
- ❑ 34% never and 27% rarely refer students to legal authorities

Source: Missouri School Health Education Profile, 2002. Responses from secondary building principals in Missouri. Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. Jefferson City, Missouri.

The need for total tobacco-free school policies that are enforced—

- ❑ Early adolescence (ages 11-15, grades 6-10) is the period when most smokers tried cigarettes for the first time. The majority of adult smokers progressed to become regular smokers before the age of 18.
- ❑ Young people who believe more adults and young people smoke than actually do are more likely to approve of smoking and to become smokers.
- ❑ Young people are more likely to become users when in environments that approve of tobacco use.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking or Health. July 1994.

Tobacco-free school policies should be comprehensive—

- ❑ A comprehensive tobacco-free school policy prohibits tobacco use by students, faculty/staff and visitors in school buildings, buses and vehicles, on school grounds, and at school-sponsored activities and events off school property.

How to get started making the schools in your community tobacco-free—

- ❑ Find out if there is a school health advisory committee, youth group, or community coalition working on tobacco issues in the school and community. If so, join and identify others who would like to learn more about the school's tobacco policies.
- ❑ Ask a school administrator about the school's tobacco policies and how they are enforced. Learn the process for adopting new school policy or strengthening current policy. Solicit his/her support and recommendations for a tobacco free school policy.
- ❑ Prepare a policy paper on why a tobacco free school policy is needed. Present to the school administration and seek support for taking to the school board.
- ❑ Involve students in presenting to the school administration and school board. It is their school and they are who the policy is intended to protect.

Additional information—

Missouri Tobacco Use Prevention Program
Missouri Dept. of Health and Senior Services
Bureau of Health Promotion
573-522-2820

www.dhss.state.mo.us/SmokingAndTobacco